Defining the lingustic, minorities

†1724. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any fixed criteria for deciding the linguistic minorities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any concrete plans have been formulated by Government for collective development of linguistic minorities;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of States/Union Territories where Nepali speaking people have been recognized as a linguistic minority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) Linguistic minorities have not been defined in the Constitution or by any statute. They get defined when their mother tongue differs from the regional language of the area. They are identified by State Government/Union Territory on the basis of Census data.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities has reported that there is no procedure/rule for recognition of a minority language group, including Nepali, by the states/Union Territories. However, on the basis of inputs received from the various State Governments and census records, Nepali is spoken in the States of Assam, West Bengal (major language in Darjeeling District), Meghalaya , Sikkim (regional language) and Mizoram.

Academic and housing diversity statistics

†1725. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the expert committee appointed by Government has submitted its report on academic and housing diversity statistics of Sachar Committee;

(b) if so, whether the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) has given its comments on it;

(c) whether it is a fact that CSO has pointed towards various shortcomings therein and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the plan to address these shortcomings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) The Expert Group appointed by the Government to recommend an appropriate 'diversity index' to promote diversity in living, educational and work spaces has submitted its report.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In its comments, Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) has drawn attention towards the weak points in the formulation at the micro and macro levels and towards statistical challenges.

(d) The report of the Expert Group and comments received thereon have been considered in the light of the proposal for setting up an Equal Opportunity Commission.

Settlement of dues of Maharashtra Government

1726. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal from the Maharashtra Government is pending with the Ministry, regarding payment of funds for the non-conventional energy projects successfully implemented since 2002-03;

(b) whether it is a fact that the amount due to the State Government amounts to around Rs. 500 crore; and

(c) if so, the reasons for the delay and by when the claim is likely to be settled?

THE MINISTER OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (DR. FAROOQ ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. However, proposals for release of Central Financial Assistance totaling around Rs. 10 crore under the Biogas programme for the period 2002-03 onwards have been received. There are pending settlement due to discrepancies/non-receipt of Audit reports. The State Government has been advised to clarify and fulfill the requirements at the earliest.

Electrification of Remote Villages

1727. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the Minister of NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of achievements made in the backward districts of the country under the Remote Village Electrification Programme, till May, 2009;

(b) whether any installation cost has been fixed for solar energy devices and setting up of bio-gas plants under the National Bio-gas and Manure Management Programme as well as subsidy given to the people below poverty line; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and whether there is any special price list for the North Eastern Region?

THE MINISTER OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (DR. FAROOQ ABDULLAH): (a) The Remote Village Electrification Programme is being implemented in those remote, unelectrified villages/hamlets where grid connectivity will not be feasible in near future. These villages generally lie in economically, socially or industrially backward regions of the country. The details of villages/hamlets covered under the Programme as on 31st May, 2009 are given in the enclosed Statement-I (*See* below).